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SB 2376
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO DEVELOP AND CARRY OUT
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Planning and Environment
Public Hearing - February 10, 1988

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SB 2376 would appropriate \$85,000 to fund the development and implementation of environmental education programs. The program would develop public awareness and education by producing and distributing, in various ways, environmentally related information. Such information would include publications outlining environmental review procedures and the duties and functions of the Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC). Public environmental awareness would be encouraged through bus posters, bumper stickers, grocery bags, newsletters, educational packets, and workshops.

The importance of improving the general public and agency awareness of the environment, of environmental review procedures, and the role of the Office of Environmental Quality Control is appropriately recognized by SB 2376 and we support the intent of this bill. We would like to offer some additions and amendments for your consideration.

In the past, OEQC published an information handbook on Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) preparation and review procedures. An update of this handbook is long over due and would benefit those members of the community most involved in the business of preparing EIS's as well as those State and county personnel charged with the responsibility of reviewing EIS's. Availability of the EIS handbook in concert with the environmental workshops on various environmental permit preparation and review procedures would be most useful. We suggest that the workshops be directed primarily to people actively involved in the preparation and review of environmental permits, EIS's and related environmental management procedures, particularly the staff of State and County agencies responsible for environmental management decisions and related documents.

Public awareness of environmental information would be addressed efficiently and in a more timely manner by the suggested publication of a newsletter. Current environmental issues in the State and procedures for public involvement would be provided by such a regular periodic publication. The need for a personal computer system, including telecommunication capability, is absolutely essential.

The suggested development and distribution of bumper stickers, bus posters, grocery bags, and the development of educational materials, including curriculum, books, coloring books, games, and posters would, in our opinion, be more appropriate for the Department of Education with technical input, and guidance from OEQC. Given the modest staff of OEQC we believe that time, funds, and efforts on educational programs will be more effective if they are focused on providing technical materials, and agency support and guidance to address critical issues pertinent to Chapter 343, the Environmental Impact Statement Law, and other functional responsibilities of OEQC under HRS 341, rather than the physical preparation and distribution of posters, stickers, etc.
